/The Monguors/

N *563 M 614 565 554 [466] into another lord's service. If they attempted to do so, the punishment was death. After the great rebellion of the Moslems (1862-1878), however, the military power of the Monguor gradually declined. No T'u-ssu after this time really wielded any true power.

The principle of corvee, to which the Monguor were still liable, is founded on the vassalage which previously bound the nomads to the "service" of the chief. Although they neither tilled the soil nor paid taxes, nonetheless they were real vassals.

N *563 M 614 219 565 The register of all noble families is kept at the seat of the T'u-ssu. Even the daughters, and the families into which they marry, are noted. A noble is also entered in the book of genealogies. However, the names of unmarried sons are not inscribed, because they presumably have not produced sons for the clan.

N *563 M 174 565 M [554] When the Monguor first settled in their frontier territory and began the transition from nomadism to agriculture, there was probably considerable social distance between the commoners and the nobles. With settled life and the increasing dominance of agriculture, noble families, like commoner families, became increasingly dependent on their ability to manage their own farms. Local prestige was determined more and more by wealth and ability, and class became secondary.

N *563 M 621 622 565 The Monguor village consists of a group of families living in a well-defined territory and subject to the immediate authority of the village chief. All villagers till the soil, and the population is large or small according to the fertility of the soil and the extent of the pastures. Nobles and commoners live in the same kind of house, and they gain their livelihood in the same manner. Therefore, their substance and wealth are not sharply differentiated.

N *563 M 596 [421] [561] [595] M [428] Until 1922 the extended Monguor family was a patrilineal, patrilocal family under the authority of the grandfather, or the great-grandfather if he survived. No family usually exceeded four generation. Property and wealth were owned collectively, but authority over the property was unequally concentrated in the senior generation. Polygamy in Monguor society is decidedly an economic question, since polygamy does not go well with residence in a common courtyard. The breakup of an extended family is visibly symbolized when one of the nuclear families sets up its own kitchen. The position of chief or head of the family normally passes by primogeniture to the eldest son of the first wife of the previous head. In every family, rich or poor, noble or commoner, the head of the family is also the religious chief, the family administrator, and the family representative in dealing with higher authorities outside the family. In his administration of the family, he has authority over all the community property. The breakdown of the extended family usually takes place when the grandfather dies. It is very seldom that his surviving sons remain united under the authority of the eldest son. More commonly, the sons divide the property and "build their own kitchens.

M [182] [168] [428]